United Nations S/2017/301

Security Council

Distr.: General
13 April 2017
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 7 April 2017 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith humanitarian and information bulletins from the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic for the period 4-7 April 2017 (see annex).

I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) P. **Illichev**
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

17-06088 (E) 180417 190417

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 7 April 2017 from the Chargé d'Affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (4 April 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out eight humanitarian operations: seven in Aleppo governorate and one in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

In Aleppo city, 6 tons of bottled drinking water were distributed to residents of Iman, Qadi Askar, Hananu-2, Khalidiyah, Jandul and Karm al-Da'da' districts.

Residents of Manbij, a city in Aleppo governorate, received 1,000 portions of hot food and 200 food parcels. In addition, essential goods and food products were delivered to social service centres in the city of Jablah in Ladhiqiyah governorate.

Over the past 24 hours, 3,368 residents have received humanitarian assistance.

In total, 10.5 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Russian aircraft parachuted 20.4 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which were received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 April 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, three ceasefire agreements have been signed with Ayn Ayshah in Qunaytirah governorate and with Najha and Adiliyah in Damascus governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,439.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 139.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 23 violations in the following governorates: 13 in Damascus, 6 in Ladhiqiyah, 3 in Dar'a and 1 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported 19 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 8 in Damascus, 4 in Idlib, 2 in Aleppo, 2 in Dar'a, 2 in Homs and 1 in Hama.

The Russian representative office has not confirmed any of the 19 violations during its investigations of the incidents.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (5 April 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out six humanitarian operations in Aleppo governorate.

In Aleppo city, 3,000 portions of hot food and of bread were delivered to residents of Jabal Badro, Qasilah, Haydariyah, Hamdaniyah-3, Ashrafiyah and Shaykh Sa'd districts.

Over the past 24 hours, 3,350 residents have received humanitarian assistance.

In total, 1.8 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Two humanitarian convoys of United Nations cargoes were sent to Tall Shihab and Muta'iyah in Dar'a governorate with the assistance of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides.

Russian aircraft parachuted 20.4 tons of humanitarian cargoes (food products) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which were received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (6 April 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, two ceasefire agreements have been signed with Najran in Suwayda' governorate and Bahdaliyah in Damascus governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,441.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 139.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 remains unchanged at 225.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 17 square kilometres of territory. A total area of 3,755 square kilometres has been liberated.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 19 violations in the following governorates: 9 in Damascus, 6 in Ladhiqiyah and 4 in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported 14 violations in the following governorates: 6 in Damascus, 4 in Aleppo, 2 in Dar'a, 1 in Hama and 1 in Idlib.

The Russian representative office has not confirmed any of the 14 violations during its investigations of the incidents.

Humanitarian bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (6 April 2017)

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Russian Federation

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides has carried out six humanitarian operations: five in Aleppo governorate and one in Damascus governorate.

In Aleppo city, 2.4 tons of bottled drinking water, 1,000 portions of hot food and 630 food parcels were distributed to residents of New Shahba', Muyassar, Bani Zayd and Shaykh Maqsud districts, as well as to the refugee camp at Ibbin in Aleppo governorate.

Residents of Jayrud in Damascus governorate received 500 food parcels.

Over the past 24 hours, humanitarian assistance has been provided to 3,380 residents.

In total, 6.8 tons of humanitarian cargoes have been distributed to the population.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic by international organizations

Russian aircraft parachuted 21 tons of humanitarian products (food parcels) to the city of Dayr al-Zawr, which were received by the Syrian authorities through the United Nations.

Information bulletin of the Russian Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic (7 April 2017)

Reconciliation of opposing sides

Over the past 24 hours, three ceasefire agreements have been signed with Harran in Suwayda' governorate, Mazra'at Qarmashiyah in Damascus governorate and Kawm al-Wayisiyah in Qunaytirah governorate.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process has increased to 1,444.

Negotiations on joining the ceasefire regime continued with armed opposition groups in Aleppo, Damascus, Hama, Homs and Qunaytirah governorates.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire of 27 February 2016 is unchanged — it is still 139.

The number of populated areas which Syrian government forces have liberated from armed groups of the international terrorist organization Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) since 1 January 2017 has increased to 225.

Over the past 24 hours, government forces have gained control of 10 square kilometres of territory. A total area of 3,765 square kilometres has been liberated.

Observance of the ceasefire regime

At 0000 hours on 30 December 2016, a ceasefire came into force in accordance with the consolidated agreement on a comprehensive resolution of the Syrian crisis.

The number of Syrian opposition armed groups that have joined the ceasefire regime is unchanged — it is still 64.

Over the past 24 hours, the Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the consolidated agreement has reported 19 violations in the following governorates: 9 in Damascus, 7 in Ladhiqiyah, 2 in Hama and 1 in Dar'a.

The Turkish representative office has reported 10 violations of the consolidated agreement in the following governorates: 4 in Damascus, 2 in Hama, 2 in Dar'a, 1 in Homs and 1 in Idlib.

The Russian representative office has not confirmed any of the 10 violations during its investigations of the incidents.

United Nations S/2017/302

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 April 2017
English
Original: French

Letter dated 5 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit herewith the state of the nation address delivered by His Excellency Joseph Kabila Kabange, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on Wednesday, 5 April 2017 to a joint session of both Houses of Parliament (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ignace **Gata Mavita wa Lufuta**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-05920 (E) 170417 240417

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 5 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

Dear compatriots,

Following my previous state of the nation address in November 2016, the socioeconomic, political and security situation of the country has compelled me to discharge this constitutional duty early.

Gloomy macroeconomic indicators and their understandable impact on purchasing power have caused public unease, while at the political level two stumbling blocks encountered during the negotiations being facilitated by the Inter-diocesan Centre of Kinshasa on the implementation of the agreement of 31 December 2016, namely, the procedure for selecting the Prime Minister and appointing a new head of the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord, have caused some concern.

With regard to security, a number of deplorable and unacceptable acts of barbarism have taken place in the province of Kasai Central and the surrounding areas, including the looting and desecration of places of worship, the rape and beheading of numerous women, of some 100 members of our police and army, of a number of civilians and of two experts working for the United Nations.

In their memory, and in the memory of all the sons and daughters of our country who have lost their lives since the start of the year in the service of this country and those who have passed away from natural causes, including the leader of the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social, Étienne Tshisekedi wa Mulumba, I invite you to observe a minute's silence.

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Speaker Deputies and Senators,

Dear compatriots,

In the first quarter of the year the security situation in the east of the country improved and peace is gradually returning to the lives of the people of Tanganyika and North and South Kivu, thanks to military operations carried out by our security forces and the outreach efforts of local authorities and community leaders. Such work must continue if we are to achieve lasting peace.

Yet we cannot pause to celebrate these positive developments, however justifiable that might be, because the epicentre of this crime wave is moving towards the centre of the country, where a local conflict had degenerated into deadly and indiscriminate violence perpetrated by militias that have become terrorists bent on raping, killing, burning and destroying everything in their path.

This situation, as you know, is at the heart of our deepest concerns.

The vexed question of how to resolve similar local tensions in the future has been addressed through a political and administrative process initiated by the central Government.

In the light of the unacceptable atrocities being committed against the civilian population and continued public unrest, which are threatening the peace and stability of our country, we have a constitutional obligation to pursue all legal channels to restore the authority of the State in that part of the Republic.

This is the background behind the orders I recently signed establishing an operational sector in the Kasais.

At the same time, the central Government has been instructed to strengthen its presence in the affected provinces through the ministers responsible for internal and customary affairs, with a view to finding political and administrative settlements to the numerous local conflicts reported across the country, with the support of the national association of traditional authorities of the Congo.

It is clear that all the alleged perpetrators of abuses and serious crimes against civilians will be brought to justice. To date, seven members of the armed forces, who have already been placed under arrest, will be held accountable for their actions in court.

Similarly, crimes committed by militias against innocent citizens, law enforcement officers and United Nations personnel will not go unpunished.

The perpetrators of such crimes, some of whom are already being investigated by military tribunals, will also be punished in accordance with the law.

The Government has already been instructed to provide all necessary assistance to aid these investigations.

In the meantime, I would appeal for calm in Kasai Central and urge the handful of young people who have been drawn into futile operations that have devastating consequences for people living in the provinces concerned to lay down their weapons and cease their criminal activities.

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

I consider it my duty to recall once again the fragility of the fundamentals of our economic fabric, which are mainly directed towards the tertiary sector, and marked on the one hand by imports of essential items consumed by the Congolese people, items that we do not produce, and, on the other hand, by exports to industrialized countries of raw materials, our main source of budgetary revenue, but whose prices we do not control.

It goes without saying that until we change this paradigm, our economy will remain fragile and will continually be buffeted by upheavals in the international economic environment.

In the same vein, as long as our tax system remains burdensome, discriminatory and subject to heavy parafiscal taxation, the business environment will not be conducive to productive investment or tax compliance.

Today, we have grasped the magnitude of the challenge. We must act without further delay.

In addition to legitimate public investment, we must therefore exercise the option of promoting support for the productive private sector through, in particular,

direct support to small and medium-sized industries and small and medium-sized enterprises, especially those involved in agribusiness, whose activities are being conducted within the context of value chains.

Indeed, we must produce what we consume and, as I have already said, add value to our products intended not only for domestic consumption but also for export in order to make them more competitive.

Our country cannot indefinitely remain a vast market providing people from other countries with business and employment opportunities at the expense of its own people and economy.

Moreover, domestic resource mobilization efforts will be continued through an uncompromising struggle against customs fraud, tax fraud and smuggling, by means of necessary tax reforms and the imminent introduction of computerized taxpayer management systems, provided by competent experts, within our financial authorities.

Here, I would like to highlight the urgent need for the Government of the Republic, the National Assembly and the Senate to take productive steps to adopt, as soon as possible and during the current session, a new law on taxation and a law on public-private partnership, without neglecting to finalize the law amending certain provisions of the mining code, which amendment has been suspended for several months in both houses.

The Government will thus have solid tools to stabilize, structurally and over the long term, the current economic situation, before permanently reversing the worrisome current trend. Improving the social situation of our people depends on it.

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

Dear compatriots,

I would like to remind the youth of our country that the effective implementation of the appropriate policies pledged last November and intended to bring about their socioeconomic reintegration has begun.

The promotion of local entrepreneurship through the above-mentioned measures in support of the private sector and to bring about the entry into force of the law on subcontracting to local small and medium-sized enterprises and small and medium-sized industries is now an opportunity be seized.

Alongside these efforts, which will create several thousand jobs, companies in the State's portfolio have been instructed to prioritize the elimination of youth unemployment as part of their recovery plan.

As for State officials both civilian and military, the ongoing process of improving their living conditions will continue by means of downsizing and payroll reforms, which will ultimately make it possible to reallocate the savings achieved to gradual readjustments of their salaries.

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

In keeping with what has become a political tradition in our country, since June 2015 I have exercised the option of involving the political and social class of our country in a dialogue in order to reach the consensus necessary to organize the third cycle of peaceful elections.

That initiative was in fact a follow-up to similar efforts in 2012 when I sought to secure a national consensus to defend the fatherland from pretended rebellions by convening national consultations that made it possible to strengthen our national cohesiveness and unite in supporting our army in its efforts to defend the fatherland.

Similarly, my desire for consensus again led me, in November 2015, to convene an inclusive national political dialogue facilitated internationally by the African Union.

That forum, which had itself been preceded by a preliminary dialogue between the majority and the Union pour la démocratie et le progrès social (UDPS), organized in several European cities, led to the 18 October 2016 agreement, at the Cité de l'Union africaine, between the political opposition, civil society and the majority.

Although the agreement created a solid basis for meeting our expectations, I decided to give priority to the overarching need for inclusiveness with a view to securing a broader consensus of stakeholders in the electoral process by entrusting the Conférence épiscopale nationale du Congo with a mission of good offices with the opposition Rassemblement.

This is the place to commend the bishops of the Catholic church for their excellent work leading to the agreement of 31 December and certain areas of convergence on the modalities for implementing the agreement.

Sadly, in spite of their laudable efforts, which enabled 90 per cent of the expected results to be achieved, the stakeholders were unable to reach a consensus on two points, namely, the appointment of the Prime Minister and the chair of the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord, as set forth in the final mediation report transmitted on 28 March this year (see S/2017/262).

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

I would like to reiterate that the goal of the dialogue was and remains the organization of peaceful elections.

In that regard, I congratulate our central electoral commission for its remarkable work carried out under extremely difficult conditions, leading to the registration of over 21.5 million voters with an estimated budget of 320 million dollars mainly from the Government itself.

I wish to solemnly inform our people that the elections will indeed go ahead. Doubters have no grounds for concern. Everything will be done to achieve this goal in accordance with the calendar set by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The 18 October agreement, like the agreement of 31 December 2016 which secured the sought-after consensus on the order of elections and the electoral roll, once it was determined, and the distribution of seats, as determined by an act to be adopted by both chambers, nothing should preventing the election from going ahead.

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

Since this process is the work of the Congolese people and funded by the Congolese people themselves, no foreign interference in the organization, let alone the implementation, of the process will be tolerated.

As in any other State Member of the United Nations, it is a matter of domestic politics and therefore a matter of national sovereignty.

Our duty is precisely to defend national independence and sovereignty in accordance with the commitment made to our people under the terms of our constitutional oath.

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

Dear compatriots,

Over the last 48 hours, I have listened to the political and social class that responded to my invitation. I noted a convergence of views, in particular over the urgent need to resolve two issues relating to the implementation of the agreement, especially when it comes to the appointment of a new Prime Minister.

In that regard, given the broad consensus on the procedure for appointing the Prime Minister and the powers of the appointing authority, I invite the Rassemblement to overcome its internecine squabbles and find a common approach to the list of prime ministerial candidates who have the required and agreed profile, as requested for several months, with a view to expediting the process of forming the new Government of national unity.

As I mentioned in my message of November 2016, and given that the country should no longer be held hostage by private interests and jockeying for position by political actors, the Prime Minister must be appointed within 48 hours.

As for the Presidency of the Conseil national de suivi de l'accord, I request both chambers of the parliament to adopt, without delay, the related organization act, and call for expedited discussions within the political class to appoint, as soon as the new Government takes office, a mutually agreed upon figure to head that body.

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honourable Speaker of the Senate,

Honourable Deputies and Senators,

Dear compatriots,

As before, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is destined not for failure but for emergence. Since its current difficulties have been clearly identified, appropriate responses are being found.

I am convinced that with the involvement of everyone, from the opposition to civil society and the majority, and most of all with the support of our people, we will be able to overcome the challenges we face, and our beautiful country will survive the apocalyptic and ill-intentioned predictions of its critics.

God bless our country!

Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you.

United Nations A/71/866–S/2017/303

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
10 April 2017

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-first session
Agenda item 61
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Letter dated 7 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a memorandum released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) on 6 April 2017 with regard to the fact that the level of political, military and economic pressure and aggressive schemes of the US against the DPRK is now beyond the danger limit (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **Ja** Song Nam
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

17-05840 (E) 180417

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 7 April 2017 from the Permanent Representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Memorandum released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 6 April 2017 with regard to the level of political, military and economic pressure and aggressive schemes of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea now being beyond the danger limit

The level of political, military and economic pressure and aggressive schemes of the US against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is now beyond the danger limit.

It is without any hesitancy that heinous acts are committed to insult our supreme dignity. "Special operations" aimed at "getting rid of the headquarters of the north" are in an open preparation in the real stage.

The US is now staging military exercises against the DPRK at our doorstep, mobilizing the largest-ever aggression forces and state-of-the art nuclear striking means. They even threw off the deceptive veil, as they said the military exercises were of a "defensive nature".

Not content with this, the US is trying to disturb our socialist construction by imposing the toughest economic sanctions and blockades. Furthermore, it has revealed its open bid to cause economic suffocation against the DPRK.

The situation on the Korean peninsula has come to the pass where it is no longer in control due to extreme provocative and aggressive war moves conducted by the US, which have followed the path of getting worse.

If war sparks off on the Korean peninsula, there will come up the issue of accounting for war provocation and post-war follow-up.

It is against this background that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the DPRK releases this memorandum in order to lay open the gravity and illegality of the aggressive schemes of the US, which is now driving the Korean peninsula situation to thermonuclear war, as well as the justness and legality of the inevitable defensive choice of the DPRK to cope with the US schemes.

It is more often than not that the DPRK has already warned that the grave aggressive acts would be considered as a declaration of war whenever the US and its vassal forces committed grave provocations. It has also made it clear that the provokers should be held accountable for all the grave consequences arising from them.

The following examples are telltale evidence of all of them:

- The Bush administration, after taking office, declared as its State policy to negate our system by designating the DPRK as an "axis of evil". It even openly declared nuclear war against the DPRK by putting it as a target of pre-emptive nuclear strike (see 10 January 2003 statement of DPRK government)

- The US is engrossed in the mean tricks of a smear campaign to tarnish the image of the DPRK system, groundlessly charging it with drug smuggling, counterfeiting of money, suppression of religious freedom, exodus of refugees, human trafficking, training of computer hackers and arms sale, etc.

At the same time, it is hampering the routine service of DPRK-flagged trading vessels under various pretexts. This hostile act is, in fact, little short of a sea blockade against the DPRK.

No matter how desperately the US may try to cover up these moves, they are, in the final analysis, acts of scrapping the Armistice Agreement and a declaration of war. In the long run, it is an act of war (18 June 2003 statement of the MFA spokesman).

- The Bush administration was undisguised in its attempt to seek a "regime change" in those countries, including the DPRK, which stood independent and are not obedient to what it had dictated upon them by means of pre-emptive strike while labelling them "outposts of tyranny".

The "National Security Strategy Report" announced this time reveals, in a nutshell, the US intention to start a war to prevent nuclear proliferation, "combat terrorism" and "spread democracy". It is, therefore, nothing but a brigandish document declaring a war, as it is an indication that the Bush regime will not rule out even a war to bring down those countries which refuse to follow its ideology and value by branding them as enemies without exception (21 March 2006 statement of the MFA spokesman).

- The US has become more frantic in its military exercises and arms build-up on the peninsula and in its vicinity for the purpose of launching the second Korean War since it made a de facto "declaration of war" against the DPRK through the recent brigandish adoption of a United Nations Security Council resolution

At the same time, it is making desperate efforts to internationalize the sanctions and blockade against the DPRK by leaving no dastardly means and methods untried in a foolish attempt to isolate and stifle it economically and bring down the socialist system chosen by its people themselves.

The Bush administration has gone to the length of making an ultimatum that it would punish the DPRK if it refuses to yield to the US within the timetable set by it (3 October 2006 statement of the MFA).

- The United States instigated the United Nations Security Council to pass another "resolution" calling for harsh international sanctions and a blockade against the DPRK, unreasonably describing its nuclear test for self-defence as a "threat" to international peace and security.

The United Nations Security Council "resolution", needless to say, cannot be construed otherwise than as a declaration of a war against the DPRK (17 October 2006 statement of the MFA spokesman).

- The United Nations Security Council, at the instigation of the US, has finally adopted a "resolution on sanctions" against the DPRK over its second nuclear test.

An attempted blockade of any kind by the US and its followers will be regarded as an act of war and met with a decisive military response (13 June 2009 statement of the MFA).

- Human rights precisely mean the right to independence and the national sovereignty of a relevant country. Therefore, the brigandish "resolution" against the DPRK's genuine human rights means the most undisguised war declaration to infringe upon its sovereignty (23 November 2014 statement of the DPRK National Defence Commission)

- The Obama administration, too, excluded the DPRK from the list of the "nuclear non-use" in April of 2010, fully revealing its scenario for mounting a

pre-emptive attack on the DPRK. Through this, it has revealed its open bid to launch a nuclear pre-emptive strike against the DPRK. It continues even now to profess about it. The US has staged large-scale joint military drills every year and made practical preparations for a nuclear attack on the DPRK by mobilizing various types of nuclear hardware to be used in the war.

The aggressive nature and danger of these exercises lies in the fact that the US threw off the deceptive mask of "annual" and "defensive" it has veiled so far and is examining the "decapitation raid" aiming at our supreme headquarters and the tactics of "high-density strike" at our strategic strike means in practice and openly committing reckless provocations like the "precision strike drill" to destroy the office room of our supreme headquarters; herein lies the aggressive and dangerous character of the co-military exercise.

There is no country or government in the world which will tolerate such a challenge of maniacs running amok to eliminate the headquarters of a sovereign State through special operations (31 March 2016 statement of the MFA spokesman).

• What's more serious is that various types of offensive operations, including the "decapitation raid" aiming at our supreme headquarters, the "operation for advancing into Pyongyang" and the "precision strike drill" aimed at destroying the office of our supreme leadership, have been carried out in actual manoeuvres in accordance with "OPLAN-5015"

The war rehearsals were the largest-ever manoeuvres hostile to the DPRK, as it was manifest in the drills that the US scenario and moves to physically eliminate the DPRK reached an extremely dangerous phase.

It is tantamount to an open declaration of war against the DPRK that the US, kicking off the drills, openly revealed its attempt to mount a pre-emptive attack on the DPRK after discarding even the spurious mask of "defensive" (30 April 2016 statement of the MFA spokesman).

• The supreme leadership of the DPRK, which its servicepersons and civilians have safeguarded at the cost of their lives while following with all sincerity, represents the dignity and sovereignty of the DPRK and the destiny of the Korean army and people

But the US dared to challenge the dignity of the DPRK supreme leadership, an act reminiscent of a newborn puppy knowing no fear of a tiger. This is the worst hostility and an open declaration of war against the DPRK, as it has gone far beyond the confrontation over the "human rights issue".

Now that the US has overstepped the "red line" in the showdown with the DPRK by perpetrating such a thrice-cursed crime, the DPRK came to have the legitimate rights to take all necessary countermeasures (7 July 2016 statement of the MFA).

• The General Staff of the Korean People's Army (KPA) warns the hideous provocateurs as follows with regard to the situation that has reached an extreme phase which should no longer be overlooked:

1. The General Staff declares the KPA's stand to mercilessly smash the enemy's moves with its own style of special operation and pre-emptive attack, now that the sinister aim of the US imperialists and the south Korean war maniacs' "special operation" to hurt the dignity of the DPRK's supreme leadership has become clear and they have disclosed even the dangerous attempt at "pre-emptive attack".

2. They should be mindful that the KPA will deal deadly blows without prior warning at any time as long as the operational means and troops of the US and south Korean puppet forces involved in the "special operation" and "pre-emptive attack" targeting the DPRK remain deployed in and around south Korea.

3. Once the enemy launches the said "operation and strike", they will only bring about a historic event in which the US imperialists will face a miserable doom and the south Korean puppet forces a final ruin (26 March 2017 warning by spokesman for the KPA General Staff).

Our serious warning goes not to each US administration. It rather goes to the US itself. Despite this, the US gets more intensive in its act to run counter to our repeated warning in defiance of them.

Provocative remarks viciously picking on our supreme dignity, which are as grave as a declaration of war, are pouring out from the US without hesitation.

The US threw off its veil of "defensive nature" used at the time of the past joint military exercises and is now mobilizing nuclear strategic assets like striking groups of the nuclear carrier *Carl Vinson* and strategic bomber B-1B thus to cause the worst threat of a nuclear pre-emptive strike against the DPRK.

Worse still, it does not hide the fact that the scenario of "special operation" being staged by the ill-famed special warfare units is mainly aimed at carrying out the "beheading operation" for "removing the headquarters of the north" and the "pre-emptive attack" operation for blowing up nuclear and rocket bases.

While cooking up the illegal "sanctions resolutions" and forcing other countries to carry them out, the US is now enforcing separate sanctions to stamp out the DPRK's right to existence and development by all possible means.

They are making frantic efforts to isolate and stifle the DPRK as evidenced by the adoption of three "sanctions resolutions" against the DPRK on 29 March alone.

Nuclear threat and blackmail, sanctions and blockade by the US have never stopped, even for a day. But it was never waged as it is now in its frantic nature. All this means that its moves have gone over the hostile acts into full-scale war.

The present US administration is committing itself to its anti-DPRK campaign in an unprecedented way. Because of this, the Korean peninsula is now in a war situation. It is from this that the DPRK was compelled to put into practice the repeated warning it had so far sent to the US while displaying its maximum restraint.

According to universally accepted international laws, the heinous acts of the US and its vassal forces to stifle the DPRK are an apparent act and crime of war.

The code of offences against the peace and security of mankind, adopted at the sixth session of the International Law Commission (3 June to 28 July 1954), defined the preparation for use of arms by one State against another State as a crime against the peace and security of mankind.

Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations stated that "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations". The Draft Declaration on Rights and Duties of States, in its article 9, stated that "Every State has an obligation of refraining itself from the use of war as a means of State policy, stand against territorial integrity and political independence of another State or threat or use of arms through other means inconsistent with international law and order".

The Convention for the Definition of Aggression, as well as the resolution entitled "Definition of aggression", adopted at the twenty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly, defined the sanctions entailing the blockade of a sovereign State in a time of peace as an act of aggression and illegal.

Article 2 (definition of aggression) of that Convention stipulated that a State which is the first to commit acts, without a declaration of war, such as an attack by its land, naval or air forces on the territory, ship or airplane of another, as well as the naval blockade of the other's coast or port, is regarded as an aggressor State in terms of international disputes according to the existing convention between disputing parties.

The fifty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to condemn any act of armed aggression or threat or use of force against peoples, their elected Governments or their legitimate leaders.

Paragraph 15, article II, of the Korean Armistice Agreement (KAA) stipulated as follows: "This Armistice Agreement shall apply to all opposing naval forces, which naval forces shall respect the water contiguous to the Demilitarized Zone and to the land area of Korea under the military control of the opposing side, and shall not engage in blockade of any kind of Korea".

However, the US has imposed an ever more intensive blockade on the DPRK, thus scraping off even the paragraph banning naval blockades, the last one of KAA which had been valid merely for form's sake.

As seen above, the US is now performing practical acts of aggression and war against the DPRK through extreme military threats and blackmail and blockade-style sanctions, blatantly violating universally accepted international laws.

It is a legitimate right of the DPRK to make a resolute pre-emptive attack to thoroughly frustrate the moves for imminent and full-phased aggression and war made by the US against the DPRK.

Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, on the right of self-defence, and article 12 of the Declaration on Rights and Duties of States clearly stipulated that every State is entitled to the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence.

The Declaration on the Strengthening of International Security, adopted on 16 December 1970, stipulated that "States must fully respect the sovereignty of other States and the right of peoples to determine their own destinies, free of external intervention, coercion or constraint, especially involving the threat or use of force, overt or covert, and restrain from any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and territorial integrity of any other State or country".

Article 40 of the Hague Convention respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land also provided that violation of the armistice by one of the parties gives the other party the right of denouncing it, and even, in cases of urgency, of recommencing hostilities immediately.

The option taken by the DPRK to defend itself from the moves of hostility and war of the US would be a great war of justice to completely remove the bases of aggression and achieve national reunification, the long-cherished desire of the Korean nation.

The DPRK was founded by the general election involving both the north and south of Korea and by the general will of the entire Korean population. Since the south Korean authorities have flatly rejected the DPRK's proposal to found a

reunified federal state leaving the ideologies and systems existing in the north and the south intact, the DPRK's great war of justice would be a fair and righteous exercise of the sovereign right of the State to reclaim the territory occupied by foreign forces, and it can never be condemned as "an act of aggression" on any account.

In case a war breaks out in the Korean peninsula, the US will be held totally accountable for it, no matter who launched a pre-emptive attack, as it has constantly escalated its hostile policy towards the DPRK and driven the situation to the outbreak of war by deploying huge amount of nuclear strategic assets and special warfare means in the Korean peninsula.

The DPRK's mode of attack, once launched, would be a precision strike to destroy only the military bases of the US and its vassal forces targeting the DPRK. The DPRK will abide by the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, as a signatory to it.

As already declared, the DPRK will also take all responsible measures for protecting the legal economic interests of other countries that they hold in south Korea.

The international community should clearly understand the gravity of the situation created in the Korean peninsula by the US moves for aggression and war, and respect the option taken by the DPRK to defend itself.